

Year at a Glance

January

Thanks to a \$3.4 million appropriation under the Natural Resource Challenge, a new program dedicated to the management of native and exotic species becomes functional; the new capability is managed by the Biological Resource Management Division of the Natural Resource Program Center.

The Department of Energy announces a plan to reclaim uranium mill tailings near Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Utah, lessening the potential for surface and groundwater contamination and negative effects on endangered fish.

February

Occurring in at least seven units of the national park system, the black-tailed prairie dog is designated a candidate species for listing as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

The NPS Air Resources Division publishes a scientific report on air pollution from snowmobiles in the national park system, with an emphasis on Yellowstone National Park.

Ownership of the Glines Canyon Dam in Olympic National Park, Washington, and the Elwha Dam outside the park is transferred from private to public, paving the way for the restoration of the salmon and steelhead fisheries in the park.

March

The Canada lynx is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, with implications for park management in as many as 18 units of the national park system in the northern United States.

The NPS Water and Air Resources Divisions participate in a workshop to discuss methodologies for sampling snow and water for chemical pollutants from snowmobile emissions in national parks.

Exotic Plant Management Teams are selected for the control of exotic plant species in four areas of the national park system: Hawaii, Florida, National Capital Region, and the Chihuahuan Desert/shortgrass prairie.

Five pilot learning centers are selected across the national park system to facilitate public-private research on park resources and the accumulation, synthesis, and delivery of the information to the public.

April

The Department of the Interior holds a press conference to announce that the National Park Service will enforce regulations related to snowmobile use in the national park system, significantly reducing their use in parks.

The Director's Awards for Natural Resource Stewardship are announced for calendar year 1999 and include a park superintendent, resource manager, research scientist, facility manager, and resource manager in a small park. The award is redesigned this year and includes a bison sculpture by western wildlife sculptor Chris Schiller.

A U.S. District Court rules that the National Park Service acted properly in entering into a cooperative research and development agreement governing biological diversity prospecting by the Diversa Corporation in Yellowstone National Park. However, based on an earlier court ruling the agreement is suspended until NEPA evaluation is completed.

May

The National Park Service ignites a prescribed fire to reduce brush in Bandelier National Monument that escapes control and burns 47,000 acres and destroys or damages 380 structures in the vicinity of Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Zion National Park initiates its new bus transportation system, which promises to reduce traffic, noise, and associated resource impacts on air and vegetation in the park.

A special edition of *Park Science* is published that focuses on the contributions of the social sciences to park management.

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June

In conjunction with the meeting of the Society for Conservation Biology, the Rocky Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) hosts the annual meeting of regional and national NPS resource managers in Missoula, Montana. Discussions focus on the function of the CESUs, the Natural Resource Challenge, improving the use of the National Environmental Policy Act, revisions in NPS management policies, and several other topics.

July

Ten thousand bonytail, the rarest of four endangered Colorado River fishes, are released in the Green and Yampa Rivers in and near Dinosaur National Monument (Utah and Colorado) as part of the species' recovery.

Resource managers start a second population of rare Bonneville cutthroat trout in Great Basin National Park when they transplant 60 individuals from a genetically pure source stock, recently discovered in the park, to a different park watershed.

As part of Great Smoky Mountains National Park's All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory, more than 20 entomologists take part in a butterfly and moth "bio-blitz," identifying an astounding 706 lepidopteran species in a 24-hour period.

The NPS Intermountain Region staffs its third CESU in a year to assist parks in meeting their research needs and to help plan the operation of the new inventory and monitoring networks.

August

Using multibeam sonar technology, the U.S. Geological Survey completes its bathymetric survey of Crater Lake, recording a maximum depth of 1,958 feet and rendering the most detailed map of the lake floor to date.

Groundwater tests in the New World Mining District near Yellowstone National Park indicate the need to line a proposed waste repository with an impervious layer and leachate collection system to protect Soda Butte Creek in the park from potential acid mine drainage.

September

More than 1,200 participants gather for *Discovery 2000*, the National Park Service general conference, in St. Louis, Missouri, to develop a vision for the future of natural and cultural resource stewardship, leadership, and education in the National Park Service.

The NPS Sabbatical in the Parks program launches a website (www.nature.nps.gov/sabbaticals) to help arrange faculty sabbaticals in parks that focus research on park management and advance science and human understanding.

The National Park Service and the Society for Conservation Biology sign an agreement affirming their partnership and the participation of Associate Director Soukup on the editorial advisory board of *Conservation Biology in Practice*.

October

Congress approves \$15.3 million in budget requests tied to the Natural Resource Challenge. The funds speed up park inventories and vegetation mapping, enhance resource monitoring and the management of exotic and native species, and support many other natural resource programs.

November

The National Park System Advisory Board votes unanimously to create a standing science committee to advise the National Park Service on its programs and overall management of park resources.

December

The National Park Service proposes a rule in the *Federal Register* to phase out snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park, on the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Memorial Parkway, and, with some exceptions, in Grand Teton National Park by winter 2003–2004; snow coach use will continue to be allowed.

The National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey install a sulfur dioxide-monitoring system at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park that facilitates early warning of unhealthy concentrations of the respiratory irritant.